

# Second Timothy

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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## 2 Timothy 1

### 1:1-2

Paul identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. It was not Paul's will to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. It was Paul's will to hunt down, kill, and persecute Christians everywhere he could find them. But it was God's will for Paul to be an apostle of Jesus Christ and so that is what he became. Have you ever stopped to wonder what is God's will for your life? Have you ever thought you might want to cooperate with God's plan for your life? Do you know your purpose? Do you know why you are here and what you are supposed to accomplish on this earth? Start reading the Bible and it will become clear if you humble yourself and believe the gospel.

God promised eternal life if we believe in his son Jesus Christ. Those who choose not to believe and trust in Jesus will stand before God and give an account for all their evil deeds and evil works. They will be unable to pay back the debt of sin they owe to justice. As a result, they will be separated from God throughout all eternity. They will exist in agony, in darkness, in flames, in regret, in pain, in constant fear and anguish. There is no end to the lake of fire. No one has to go there. People choose to go there rather than humble themselves and believe in God. They would rather suffer than bow their knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. God promises us eternal life for just one thing in return. He wants us to trust him. He wants us to believe in the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day.

Life is found in Jesus. Eternal life, heaven, joy, happiness, and peace is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a free gift. God offers forgiveness of our sins. He offers us eternal life if we will believe in his son Jesus Christ. How could anyone walk away from this offer? They walk away because they do not believe. They do not believe because they think they are smarter than the Bible. They think they know better than thousands of years of people who put their trust in the scriptures. What kind of pride is that? It is the same pride that Lucifer had when God cast him down. It is the pride that says we will be our own god. It is the pride of self worship. It is the root of idolatry. Unbelief.

Paul wrote to his son in the faith. Paul was involved in bringing this young man Timothy to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul instructed him and taught him to serve others by preaching the gospel. He taught Timothy that Christ died for his sins. He taught him that Christ was buried. He taught him that Christ rose from the dead on the third day.

Timothy was Paul's dearly beloved son. I can feel emotion in these words. Here is a relationship of a father and son. Paul loved Timothy like a father loves a son. He wanted to pass on to Timothy all that God gave him. That is in all of us, isn't it? We want to pass down something of ourselves to those who come after us. We don't want to leave this world until we have given away something to those we leave behind. We want to impart something that will help others, bless others, and enable them to walk the road toward heaven we walked.

I can feel that longing to give to others. I can feel the desire to pass down to a son something that I have in my heart. May God use these words, my fishes and loaves, to feed others. May he break these words into many pieces so that others will be blessed, and fed, and nourished, and encouraged in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **1:3-5**

There is a depth of emotion in Paul's relationship with Timothy. This relationship was founded on their mutual faith in the Lord and Paul's consistent prayers for Timothy. The more he prayed for Timothy the closer they became. Depth in relationships are always founded on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and prayer for one another. These are the friendships we miss today because it is rare to find someone with a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus. And then even if you do find someone like this it is difficult to cultivate this relationship. It takes time. It takes prayer for that person.

Notice Timothy's faith did not spring out of thin air. There was a history of faith with his mother and his grandmother. This is the same with my story. I did not come to know the Lord on my own. I had a mother who shared her faith in Jesus. I had a teacher in high school who led bible studies before and after school. I met Christians when I worked who pointed me to the Lord Jesus by their actions, words, and attitudes. God put people in my path to stop me from living for self and turned me toward living for Christ. We need other Christians to help us grow in our faith. A community of believers is vitally important to spiritual growth for every Christian. Sadly, it is becoming more difficult to find a community of faith these days.

I wonder why Timothy cried? Paul remembered his tears. Perhaps Timothy cried when Paul had to move on with his ministry. Paul never forgot Timothy though. He continued to disciple, train, and teach Timothy even if it was only through letters. Thank God for this letter from Paul to Timothy that was preserved. There is so much to learn in this personal letter.

Paul's joy in life was helping others grow in faith in the Lord Jesus. He prayed for people to know Christ and to grow in their faith in Christ. Timothy was one that Paul invested his life and time into. He provided us with a good example of how we help others. We should look for ways to invest in people, even if it is only through writing down our thoughts and feelings.

You never know what your words might accomplish. God's word is not bound, but it will accomplish the purpose for which he sends it forth.

### **1:6-10**

Timothy received the gift of God when Paul put his hands on him. This is seen in other parts of the New Testament, in the book of Acts, when the apostles laid hands on people and they received the Holy

Spirit. The gift, then, probably pointed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This gift was receiving power from God in order to serve God and witness to others about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a gift so one can be effective in the work of the ministry. Without the gift and power of the Holy Spirit it is impossible to reach people with the gospel through preaching. "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts". Without the power of the Holy Spirit our words fall to the ground. But when a man is anointed by the power of the Spirit his words can impact others and turn on the spiritual light. Paul instructed Timothy to stir up this gift. How do we stir up the gift of God? We stay in God's word, stay in prayer, and look for opportunities to share the gospel with other people. In order to share God's word with people we have to overcome our fears which was what Paul addressed next.

It is easy to be afraid and ashamed of the testimony of the Lord Jesus. The gospel is foolishness to those who live in the world system. They will reject the gospel because it challenges everything in the world. It challenges man's pride, independence, his assertion that he provides for himself, protects himself, and worships himself. Instead, it shows us God is our provider, our protector, and that Jesus is our portion. He is the only one who is worthy to be praised.

We are not to praise men or elevate men. The gospel humbles the pride of men. It shows us we are in spiritual darkness, that we are lost, that we are facing God's wrath.

Christ died for our sins. What does this mean? It means we are completely separated from God because we are born evil, perform evil, and accept evil as normal. Human beings know nothing from birth except evil, pride, and independence from their creator. It is a miracle when anyone comes to the understanding they are a sinner.

It is like a fish realizing there is another world besides the one he swims in. How can a fish know there is another world besides the pond he swims in? He must be pulled out by the fisherman and made to see there is another world, and then he gets thrown back into the pond. But he will never forget that experience of seeing trees, grass, a blue sky, and the look of the face of that fisherman. He'll never forget the face of that fisherman. That is what it is like when a man has his spiritual eyes opened to see the face of God in Jesus Christ.

Now imagine being that fish and going back to the bottom of the pond to tell other fish that there is another world they have never seen? That is what it is like to be a Christian in this world.

There are afflictions when we participate in the work of sharing the gospel with others. The afflictions come because people won't believe us. Sometimes we find someone who is desperate or willing to take a chance and they will swim close to the surface of the pond with us and get a glimpse of the other side. Maybe they will even get caught by the fisherman and get a chance to look in his face as well. If they do, they will never be the same. They will go back into the pond with us and will know we told them the truth about the other side. Convinced by their own experience they will share with the other fish as well and become a participant in the afflictions of the gospel.

What is the gospel? Christ abolished death through his own death, burial, and resurrection. He has brought eternal life to light through the message of the gospel. It is this message we are called on to share. It is a simple message but very easy to forget.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ. Allow him to teach you about the kingdom of God. Let the words of the Lord Jesus fill your heart today.

## 1:11-12

Paul restated his calling and vocation. God called him and appointed him to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. He added here specifically that he was sent to the Gentiles, which was the pattern in the book of Acts which recorded Paul's missionary journeys. Paul was definitely God's apostle to the Gentile world. He said, however, in Romans 1 that the gospel went to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles. Paul always tried to reach the Jews first in whatever town or city he went to and when they rejected the gospel he turned his attention to the Gentile population.

Paul suffered because he was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. He suffered persecution from the Jewish world and also from Gentiles who rejected his message. He specifically stated here that his suffering came as a result of God appointing him this specific task of proclaiming the gospel. The same is true of us today. Anyone who obeys the Lord in sharing the gospel with others will suffer. It is a promise in God's word. Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Jesus said that the servant was not greater than his master. If they persecuted and killed Jesus then those who followed Jesus would certainly receive the same treatment from the world.

The religious and secular world is united against the Lord Jesus and those who follow him. They are united in a world system which is a counterfeit of God's Kingdom. In the world system everyone worships self, protects self first, and provides for self first. In God's kingdom it is the opposite. God is our portion, he is our protector, and he is our provider.

There is a problem with Christians in being ashamed of the gospel. Paul addressed this with Timothy, but it is something everyone should take to heart. It is easy to become ashamed of God's word, the gospel, and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be alert to how easy you can betray the Lord Jesus by not sharing the gospel with others. Be alert to how easy it is to go along and get along with the attitude of the world system and the people around us. This is why it is important to stay immersed in God's word and prayer. Stay in the word. Stay in prayer. Be alert. Think about your attitudes, words, and reactions to people in situations. Train yourself to have the same attitude as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul pointed again to "*that day*". He was confident that the Lord would preserve him and keep him until that day. What is that day? It is the day of the Lord. It is the day when every Christian will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and have their life reviewed by the Lord. May God help us to cultivate the ability to live every day in view of the judgment seat of Christ. May we cultivate in our heart the fear of the Lord and live in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

## 1:13-14

The Lord gave something to Timothy when Paul put his hands on him. After reading Acts and other letters of Paul it is not difficult to figure out that Timothy was filled with the Holy Spirit and received spiritual gifts from God. This occurred when Paul put his hands on Timothy. This is called "*laying on of hands*". This is also mentioned in **Acts 8:18, 1 Timothy 4:14, and Hebrews 6:2**.

John the Baptist said he baptized people with water, but the Lord Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

The baptism and the infilling of the Holy Spirit is given by the Lord Jesus Christ. Men do not give this to us. At times the Lord does this when men of God put their hands on people. It is not the men, however, nor a power of men, but it is the Lord Jesus Christ who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

Paul told Timothy to "*hold fast*" and "*keep by the Holy Ghost*". These exhortations demonstrate the believer is to cooperate and work with the Holy Spirit to keep spiritual gifts moving in the believer's life. We are to exercise ourselves to godliness. Peter taught that we are to "add to our faith". There is some exertion on the part of the believer in growing spiritually and maintaining the gifts and calling God gave us.

We should not be like Samson who took the gifts of God, the anointing, for granted, and then one day he lost his anointing when he needed it the most.

Above all else, guard your hearts, for it is the wellspring of life. We must guard and protect our spirit from the evil influence in the world.

Get in the word of God. Ready, study, memorize, and meditate on the word of God. We need to be filled with the Spirit continually.

The Lord Jesus is returning soon. **Luke 21:36**, "*Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man.*"

## 1:15-18

I've often stopped here and thought about what was taking place. Paul was warning Timothy about certain individuals, and he was commending a man and his house. Why was this? Why would Paul warn Timothy about certain individuals and also commend a specific man and his house.

I've heard that Christians are not supposed to talk about people. This is considered gossip or slander. But what is happening here? Is this gossip? Is this slander? Evidently not because it would not be in the Bible if this communication was gossip or slander. So there is a time when we need to communicate information about specific people. This is not the only example in Paul's letters where he did this. He called people out by name in several places. In Romans 16 he listed almost everyone in an entire church in Rome.

Sometimes it is right and appropriate to warn people about dangerous individuals, and especially people who are purposely harming the church. This is why I see no problem in calling out false teachers and preachers by their name. They should be rebuked publicly for leading God's people astray. It is important that we warn our brothers and sisters in Christ about dangerous people by name. Point them out. Mark them and warn the brothers and sisters to steer clear of dangerous people.

Also, we need to speak well of those who do well. We need to honor God's servants who are faithful and do good works. We should commend them so that people will know those who are faithful and

trustworthy. As much as it is important to warn about dangerous people, it is also important to commend good people.

Some of the people I have personally been encouraged and blessed by in the past have been: Dave Hunt, David Wilkerson, Chuck Smith, Corrie ten Boom, Richard Wurmbrand, Elisabeth and Jim Elliot, and Chuck Missler. These are well known public figures in Christian church history and you can easily find out information about their work, teaching, and ministries.

Others I would warn people to stay away from are Benny Hinn, Paul and Jan Crouch, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, and others who preach the heresy of the prosperity gospel or the positive confession gospel.

## 2 Timothy 2

### 2:1-2

Paul taught Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. How can someone be strong in grace? How can someone obtain grace from God? The Bible tells us exactly how to get grace from God. The Bible teaches us that God gives grace to the humble but he resists the proud. So in order to be strong in grace we must humble our heart before God and agree with God that he is the way, the truth, and the life. What God recorded in the Bible is the truth. My opinions, feelings, and thoughts are not truth. The only truth to be found is in scripture, recorded for us in the Holy Bible. To think we are smarter than the Bible is to show pride. If we show pride then God will not give grace but instead he will show his wrath. He will resist us. How does God resist someone? He takes his hand off their life. When God takes his hand off a person's life this might mean they get a lot more power in the world system. I've seen people who were under God's wrath get a lot of money and resources and position in the world system. It was evidence of God's wrath on their life. If God showed grace to that individual they would be humble, but instead they were proud. They were proud of their intellectualism, their position in the world system, and how much money they could accumulate. It was a sign of God's wrath on them.

How are we strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus? We must humble ourselves like Jesus humbled himself. Jesus humbled himself so far down he didn't have a place to lay his head. He humbled himself so much he was obedient to death, and not just any death, but the death of crucifixion. That death is one of the most humiliating ways a human being could die. But Jesus did it for us. He died in our place. He died on the cross for us so we would not have to die and go to hell.

Paul taught Timothy to take what he received from Paul and give it to other men who would be faithful to pass it down to others. Paul was already thinking about his spiritual grandchildren. He knew that the Lord Jesus started this church and it would go on without him. He wanted to make sure that everything God gave to him by way of revelation was passed to others. I feel a similar urgency in my heart. I want to make sure that everything I learned from the Lord I give to others and that it can be passed to anyone who will hear, believe, and receive the truth. May the Lord take these words and use them to feed others and nourish others in their walk of faith with the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 2:3-7

This is one of the places where the Bible exhorts us to consider something. I stop right here when reading 2 Timothy and wondered what is the message I should get from these verses. What was Paul asking Timothy to consider? He was talking about what it takes to be a good soldier. He was talking about what it takes to compete as an athlete. He was talking about how to be productive farmer. What was the underlying message? In all of these professions the person who was successful had focus. The person must remove things from his life. He must train himself and be disciplined. I think the take away is that the Christian in order to be fruitful and productive and to finish well must live a life of focus and discipline. It requires us to make priorities in our life.

In the world system people know how to set goals in order to achieve position, prestige, and money. They identify the steps they have to take in order to climb the ladder to be successful and receive rewards. What do we need to do as a Christian in order to be fruitful, productive, and finish well?

The basic goals we make include staying in God's word. How much are we reading the Bible? Every day? And when we do read the Bible is our mind wandering or do we think about what we are reading? When is the last time you memorized a bible verse? Do you think about putting scripture to work in your life by finding out how it relates to your every day life situations? When is the last time you made it a goal to obey a simple bible verse? This is just the beginning. Don't say you can't do it. Go back and read **Philippians 4:13**. *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Once we read the Bible it should change our goals. Our goal is no longer money, power, prestige, and position. Our goal should be the same as Jesus Christ. What was his goal? His goal was to lay his life down at Calvary so that we could receive eternal life. Is this our goal? Is our goal to give our life toward helping other people come to the saving knowledge of the gospel? How can we prove this is our goal in life? What actions have you taken to put this into practice? Where is the evidence in your life that you even care if people go to heaven? See where I'm getting to? Consider what I say. The Lord give you understanding in all things.

## 2:8-9

What is Paul's gospel? It is a straight forward message, and it is good news for everyone who hears, receives, and believes. What is the gospel? Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He died on the cross for our sins and he was buried. On the third day he was raised from the dead.

Paul underlined the identity of Jesus Christ as being of the seed of David. This part pointed back to the promise made to David, but the promise of the "seed" went all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God said that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. (**Genesis 3:15**).

This is exactly what Jesus Christ accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection. He destroyed the work of the devil. (**Colossians 2:15**). He overcame death, hell, and the grave. (**1 Corinthians 15:55-57**). All those who hear, believe, and receive the gospel are placed into Christ by God the Father. In other words, what Christ did is accounted to us as well. He became sin in our place so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **2 Corinthians 5:21**, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

God has done all of this for us. It is his work, and not our work. He did all the work for us. Now, our part, or our "work" is to believe in his Son that he sent into the world.

**John 6:29**, *"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."*

It is by believing the gospel that we enter the secret place with the Lord. We find entrance into God's house where we can have fellowship with him. When we enter the secret place with the Lord he becomes our provision, protection, and portion. We have nothing to fear anymore. The Lord is everything we need to live. We learn in the desert that he is the bread of life and he is the living waters. Everything in this life we need he is the answer to it all. He is the bread of life. He is the living waters. He is our home and our place of rest.

Paul suffered because of his testimony of the gospel and so shall we. However, no matter what happens God's word shall prevail and overcome. Let us stay on the side of God's word. Remain on the side of victory forever.

## 2:10-13

Paul was important in God's plan to bring salvation to the world. There would be no salvation without the finished and completed work of Christ. God chose Paul to preach the gospel. He became a partaker in the work of the gospel. As a result, Paul was persecuted and suffered because he was a faithful preacher of the gospel. When he suffered he had a choice. Do I give up? Or do I endure? Paul chose the road of endurance and perseverance. What would have happened if Paul gave up? Would most of the New Testament be missing today?

Each of us are important in God's plan. Paul was important but so is every person who receives the Lord Jesus Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ and hold a special place in this time. Our part is important in building the church God planned. There may be only one person God will use us to reach with the gospel, but every person is important to God. We are important to him. We are vital to his plan and to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul endured so others would come to the Lord Jesus Christ. He endured so others would hear the gospel and be saved. Salvation is in Christ Jesus. There is no other salvation. There is no other hope for mankind outside of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul quoted a faithful saying. It almost sounds like something that could be found in a hymn book. Maybe this was a song in the early church? If we be dead with him we shall also live with him. How can we be dead with him? When Christ died on the cross we also died with him. God counts the work of Christ on our behalf. When we believe the gospel we become part of what happened at Calvary. God places us in Christ Jesus. We died with him. We were buried with him. We were raised to new life in Christ Jesus. Romans 6 outlines this for us. This is the revelation of the gospel which God gave to the apostle Paul and which he gave to us through his preaching and the recording of his epistles. We died with Christ. We were buried with Christ. We arose from the dead with Christ. This is the work of God from first to last. You don't have to understand it. You just have to believe it.

Suffering with Christ. This means we believed the gospel and then gave it to others and we pay for this by being persecuted, slandered, and cast out. The more we participate in the gospel the more we suffer. But what is the promise? If we suffer with him we will reign with him. A time will come when Christ Jesus will return to this earth and establish his kingdom. He will reign over all the nations. And those who have suffered with him will reign with him.

It is possible for people to deny Christ but he will never deny himself. He cannot deny himself. Even if we lose faith it does not change the facts. The Lord Jesus will never change. The reality of who he is and what he has done does not hinge on our faith. The reality is the reality. If we believe we will benefit. If we don't believe then we will lose in the long run. We have a choice. Will we trust Jesus? Will we believe his word? Your reaction to Jesus does not change who Jesus is, but it will show the world who you are and where you will spend eternity.

## 2:14

Paul instructed Timothy to put the church in remembrance of certain things. What are these things? What have we covered so far? Christians will suffer in this world. It is a normal part of the Christian life to suffer with Christ and for the gospel. Also, we should remember the promise that if we suffer with Christ we will also reign with him. Don't be afraid to suffer for the sake of Christ and the gospel. We are to strive to teach people the word of God to make sure that the truth in scripture is passed down to the next generation of believers. This has happened for 2,000 years and will not stop until all God's promises are fulfilled. Find people who are faithful that you can invest in who will carry on the ministry of preaching the gospel.

To be fruitful and productive as a Christian requires discipline and focus. We have to remember that in order to succeed in the work of the ministry we must discipline ourselves and be focused. Paul gave the example of a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. Fruitfulness and finishing well require us to put forth effort and work with the Lord. We need to cooperate with the Lord and show up every day. The Lord will give us the grace we need to get the job done.

Also, we need endurance. Don't give up after a short time, but think in terms of a life long commitment. Pace yourselves so that you can finish the race. We will need to cultivate patience and endurance. We will face hard times, but God will give us grace to endure through those hard times so that we can finish our course and be fruitful along the way.

After putting people in remembrance of these instructions we need to correct people who strive over words. I've met this kind of person before. They like to pick fights in Sunday School class over side issues and derail the entire Sunday School lesson so that the teacher cannot finish his lesson but has to deal with this one unruly student while everyone sits by in frustration. The purpose of the disruption and striving is so that people will be cheated out of hearing the truth in God's word. The purpose is to subvert the hearers in the class. The enemy will even use well-meaning but ignorant Christians to subvert others so that people cannot hear God's word being taught. Think of how many times you've seen sermons or Sunday School lessons get sidelined by one or two unruly people in a class or congregation. This is the devil at work through ignorant Christians.

You don't think the devil can work through someone in church or someone who claims to be a Christian? Then why did Jesus rebuke Peter and say "get thee behind me Satan"? Because the devil was

talking through Peter's ignorance. There are a lot of ignorant people in churches who destroy and tear down more than they help in building the faith of others in the church.

Don't be one of those who tear down but instead have a quiet attitude of wanting to learn and listen to the word of God being taught in Sunday School or in church.

## 2:15

People should be ashamed if they attempt to share the gospel and cannot give a biblical presentation of what they are talking about. Paul's exhortation was to study so we can show ourselves approved to God. We should not be ashamed but correctly handle God's word.

Some bible doctrine enthusiasts make much of the "rightly dividing" to imply we must divide scripture into time periods in order to have a correct understanding of what the Bible says. There may be some truth in that but I've seen people take the idea too far. The context of this verse is correctly handling God's word, and not "*dividing*" God's word. The King James English can get us sidetracked here if we let it. Dividing God's word means to be able to "discern" or correctly explain or understand the message of the gospel.

We need to study so we can have a good conscience toward God when we share his word. It is a shame when someone preaches the word of God and is not prepared. It is easy to pick someone out who has not studied. They go off their topic pretty fast and run down rabbit trails and never make any solid point. We need to make a clear point when we share God's word, and that point is this: Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day.

How does this apply to our lives? God justified us, he sanctifies us, and he will glorify us. When I read Paul's letter I see that he applies the gospel over and over in various ways. Our foundation is Christ Jesus. Don't build on this foundation with modern philosophy, psychology, or self-help. The gospel is not about having a better life in the here and now but is about preparing our soul for God's kingdom.

There is a progressive revelation in scripture of who God is and God's plan for us. There are different time periods in which God revealed himself more clearly. There are three periods (or days): Israel, the church, and the nations. We begin at Israel, arrive in the church, and then in the last day Christ rules over the nations. There are three days. This is reflected in many ways in the Bible. Consider the different roles in scripture of prophet, priest, and king. Consider Israel, the church, and the nations. Consider that in the ark there was the law, Aaron's staff that budded, and the golden pot of hidden manna. Three in one. All of this reveals who God is. God reveals himself to us in different ways over time. The perfect revelation of God is Jesus Christ. He is the express image of God. When we see Jesus we see God.

God has a plan for Israel, for the church, and for the nations. In every one of God's three days men are saved in the same way: through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There was always a remnant in each day that believed the gospel and put their trust in Jesus. The remnant are those who overcome. They abide in the finished, completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Why the third day? Because there are three days. Israel, the church, and the nations. Prophet, priest, and king. Consider this. Think about it. May the Lord reveal who he is.

May he show us more of himself. There is nothing else that can compare with hearing the voice of the Lord speaking to a man.

## 2:16-18

How can we define profane and vain babbling? The text helps us define what Paul means by profane and vain babbling. Two men, whom Paul named, taught a doctrine that the resurrection was past. This counts as a profane and vain babbling. If this is a profane and vain babbling imagine how Paul would describe what men spout from pulpits today! I think we are probably beyond profane and vain babblings and in outright doctrines of demons pouring out of pulpits and through airwaves and across the internet.

How do we deal with this? Paul's answer was clear and concise. We shun these teachings. In today's world this means don't watch it on TV or listen on your mobile device. Switch the radio station and quit listening to false teaching on the radio. Most of what is on the airwaves today is from the prince of the power of the air. Who is that? The devil. The devil is the prince of the power of the air. Most of what is transmitted by radio, TV, and Internet is doctrines of demons. It is God's grace that any of us have knowledge of the truth left in today's world. It will get worse the closer we get to the end of the age.

Paul made a terrifying statement in these verses: "*overthrow the faith of some*". What does that mean? Does it mean a man can lose his salvation? I don't think that was in view but I think what Paul said was that someone, even a Christian, can be deceived by false teaching. They can become unfruitful, barren, and even do harm to others. They can become a serious stumbling block and may even prevent people from coming to faith in the gospel. Imagine how hard it must be for the average person today listening to Christian television to even hear a message which will bring them to the saving knowledge of Christ. What does a person need to know to be saved? They need to know they are a sinner and need a Savior. How can a man know he needs a doctor unless he first knows he is sick? Is this message preached on "Christian" TV and radio any more? You would have to look hard to find men who preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and why it is important that Christ died for our sins. He took our place. Do you know why he took your place? You probably won't find the answer to that question on Christian TV and radio.

The only hope is a grass roots revival which preaches the basic gospel consistently and fervently. It needs to be expressed in a way people can easily understand it. It should not be watered down so that people do not clearly see the severity of our condition and the amazing grace of God demonstrated by Christ dying on the cross in our place.

The Lord Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He was buried in a tomb. He arose from the dead three days later. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is God the Son. He is fully man. He is fully God. He is equal but distinct from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. God is three in one. He is prophet, priest, and king. He expresses himself through Israel, the church, and the nations. He is doing this in three acts and then all will be complete with the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

## 2:19

Ask someone if they are a Christian, and they may reply, "Yes, I am a Christian." They might add to this: "My grandfather was a preacher". Or they might say, "Yes, I am an American." However, it is doubtful they really are a Christian.

Let us rephrase the question. "Do you know the Lord?" They will reply, "Oh yes, I know the Lord." To this they may add, "My parents took me to Sunday School when I was a child."

What does this mean? I still do not know if this person is a Christian or if they know the Lord.

So, what is the correct question to ask someone? Ask this question instead: "Does the Lord know you?"

There is only one way a person can know the answer. The only way you can know if the Lord knows who you are is if you have heard God's voice. If a person is truly a Christian then they will hear God's voice, and they will have the testimony in their heart that God knows them, loves them, and died on the cross for them. True Christians don't have to be told this. They know Jesus died for them. They know it in their heart. They know God knows who they are. Jesus knows their name.

However, if someone is not a Christian and you ask them this question they will look at you like you are crazy. Does God know who I am? As soon as you get that look of ridicule or irritation rest assured: you're dealing with someone who is not born again.

The Lord knows those who are his. The person who belongs to Jesus knows this.

Here is another way you can look at someone and tell they belong to Jesus. Look at their life. Do they live in continual sin? Do they live in continual, unrepentant sin? Do they have any sorrow over their sin? Do they try to live a holy life? Those who belong to Jesus will at least try to stay away from sin. They will try to depart from iniquity. A person who has no conscience about living a lifestyle of sin is probably not a born again Christian.

What does it matter if we know people are Christians or not? It will matter in the last days because there will be a lot of people who pretend to be religious but are used by the devil to lead people away from the gospel.

The gospel is this: Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again from the dead. (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**).

When you attend church listen closely and see if you ever hear, even once, the Pastor say this from the pulpit. How often does he say this from the pulpit? Does he preach the gospel?

If he never preaches the gospel then you are probably sitting under someone who may not be a Christian. Run! Run from dead churches with spiritually dead Pastors! Run! Flee! These places are full of evil spirits and demons.

## 2:20-21

These verses are a good example of what I call the doctrine of the overcomer. I see a pattern in the Bible where there is one house but two different types of people in that house. In the house of Adam there was Cain and Abel. In the house of Abraham there was Ishmael and Isaac. In the house of Isaac there was Esau and Jacob. In the house of Israel there were the brothers against one brother who became their savior. Do you see the pattern? In the house of Israel there was King Saul and King David. Throughout the entire Bible there is this contrast between those who are of the flesh and those who are of the Spirit. Those who are of the flesh seem to always come first, and those who are of the Spirit come later. The flesh is first and then the Spirit. The man of the flesh persecutes and tries to kill the man of the Spirit. This story of the great house goes on and on until the Lord Jesus Christ arrives. He came to his own but his own received him not. Everyone who did receive him he gave them the power to become the sons of God.

There are three days in God's plan. In each one of the three days there are three houses. The first house was Israel. The second house was the church. The third house will be the king reigning over the nations. In each of these houses there is a spiritual remnant of true believers in the Messiah. They are a spiritual minority who exist in the great house. These are the vessels of honor who have purged themselves of the flesh and who are meet for the master's use. They are the ones who are prepared for every good work.

From my understanding of the Bible Jesus taught the same thing. He showed us a contrast between two types of virgins. He said there were ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. This is the same contrast throughout the Bible between those of the flesh and those of the spirit. There are two in one house. There are two groups within one context or house. This is a pattern in the Bible. There were eleven good disciples and one Judas. There is a contrast between Martha and Mary in the Bible, between the one who works, and the one who rests in Christ. This story has happened from the beginning.

The vessel of honor believer are those who rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. They abide in the righteousness of Christ. They put no confidence in themselves or their works. All our righteousness is filthy rags. But the man who trusts in the Lord Jesus receives righteousness from God by faith in Jesus. This contrast between the man of the flesh and the man of the Spirit happens right now in the church. It will continue until the end.

One will be taken and the other one will be left behind. Let us watch and pray so that we may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

## 2:22-23

Paul taught Timothy what to flee and what to avoid. In spiritual warfare, much like physical warfare, when fighting there are times avoid the enemy. What are the traps the enemy sets for the Christian? Youthful lust is one trap to flee. What are youthful lusts then? **Definition from Webster:** *To have an eager, passionate, and especially an inordinate or sinful desire, as for the gratification of the sexual appetite or of covetousness; 1913 Webster.*

Paul recognized that one problem with young people is sexual lust. He told Timothy to flee youthful lusts. Sex before marriage will destroy a man's potential for serving God in ministry. This is not a matter of forgiveness. It is a matter of a man's character. A man who wants to serve God in the gospel must renounce sexual lust. This is plain, simple, and straightforward. Paul did not go into detail; he just stated it plainly and went on to tell Timothy what he should do. He instructed him to follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace. We cannot serve God alone. We cannot grow spiritually on our own. We must pursue these qualities in the company of others who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

There are stupid questions. I don't know how many times I've heard the proverb that no question is a stupid question. But there are stupid questions. The Christian who is serving in the gospel should avoid foolish and unlearned questions. Why? Because this is a snare and a trap of the devil to tarnish the proclamation of the gospel. Instead of contradicting God's word being taught the person used by an evil spirit will keep bringing up stupid questions. They will keep distracting a group of learners away from the teacher's subject and on to some non-essential topic that has no bearing on what is being taught. I've experienced this first hand as a teacher, and I've also seen this happening in other bible classes I have attended. There is always somebody in the class whom the devil will use to ask foolish and unlearned questions in order to stop people from hearing the truth.

How do you avoid this? One simple way I found is to thank the person for asking a question, and then just ignore it and go right on teaching my subject. If they try to interrupt then politely ask them to see you after the class if it is really something important. This sometimes works but the enemy can even use this to get people's mind focused on the drama unfolding in front of them. Sometimes the best answer is no answer. Simply ignore the person interrupting the class and keep right on with your subject. People may think you are rude and of course that is exactly what the devil is trying to do. He wants to get people focused on the messenger instead of the message you are trying to convey. Best pray up and ask God to bind every devil that will try to stop the class from going forward but realize it is real spiritual warfare that is taking place every single time you open a Bible to teach or share with someone else.

Ignore the "*who was Cain's wife*" questions and keep right on moving.

## 2:24-26

I got in trouble one time with a student. I was rude to him. I acknowledged I was wrong and apologized. However, I was not satisfied with apologizing. I wanted to change. I memorized the definition of gentleness, and while studying found this verse.

Paul told us the servant of the Lord must not strive. What does this mean? We don't argue with people who disagree with us. Arguing is not part of teaching God's word. Some people think debating is part of persuading people to believe the gospel. They call it apologetics. I think we should study information and logic that help support our faith, but ultimately it is God's word that convicts the conscience of a man and not logic. We put too much hope in our intellect in today's world. We think if we are clever we can reason a person into believing the truth. However, I don't believe it works like that. Smart people know the truth and choose not to agree with it. They make a conscious choice to agree with lies and false science. This is not an intellectual problem. This is a heart problem.

The heart cannot be reasoned with. It must be struck with spiritual power and penetrated with a bolt of God's word. I find sometimes quoting a bible verse has more effect than talking someone to death with reason. The servant of the Lord must not strive.

What are we to do? This is when gentleness comes in. Our character and the way we conduct ourselves matters tremendously in sharing God's word. If we are abrasive no one will listen. We must be gentle. This must be genuine gentleness and not fake gentleness. People can tell the difference.

Be apt to teach. Be on the look out for ways to fill in the gaps if a person has a misunderstanding or does not understand the facts in the Bible. Look for ways to teach people by lifestyle, words, and attitude.

When people reject the truth they hurt themselves. They oppose themselves and not you. Everyone is made in God's image and know the truth in the conscience. When they reject the gospel they oppose what their conscience tells them is the truth. They have to work hard at convincing themselves of the lies the world system offers. Something inside men know that the gospel is true. This is why simply proclaiming the gospel can have amazing effects on people, because somehow it rings true and they know it is right. God designed us in such a way to be able to recognize truth when we hear it.

But this does not mean people will accept the truth or the gospel, even if they know it is right. People are determined to worship self instead of worshiping God so they reject his message of reconciliation. They reject the message that they need forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Instead, they chart their own destiny and blaze their own trail. This is the broad road leading men to destruction. Everyone who follows their own opinions winds up alone and in darkness.

Our part is to do our best to help people escape this trap of the devil. Some will escape; many will not.

## 2 Timothy 3

### 3:1-5

The "*last days*" is the season of time close to the return of the Lord. The last days is a season of time before Jesus returns to this earth. It is a season of time before the rapture of the church and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

Before the return of Jesus there will be perilous times. It will be a dangerous time. It will be dangerous spiritually and physically. There will be a lot of demonic activity and much deception. People will no longer be able to tell truth from lies. One of the main lies people fall for is that they are "gods". Sadly, this is promoted by most popular TV, radio, and internet mega preachers.

One reason the last days are dangerous is because men love and worship themselves. The tendency for men to worship self is actively promoted. This is something happening right now in society. There are preachers, politicians, and culture influencers who actively promote self worship. This is in the culture of today's psychology, philosophy, religion, technology, and work place. Promotion of self and self worship is taught and embraced everywhere. This world view saturates us today. What is the result of this world view and principle of living?

Paul gave a list of what happens when the predominant attitude is worship of self. Men become covetous. They become boasters, proud, blasphemers, and disobedient to parents. They are unthankful, unholy, and without natural affection. Men are truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, and they despise those that are good. They are traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. In addition to this they adopt a form of spirituality which masks the reality of their depraved character. This spirituality helps them deceive themselves and soothe their conscience. This form of religion, however, will deny the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul told us to turn away from this false religion of self worship. How do we detect it? How can we tell the difference? Listen closely. False religion promotes man's life in the here and now. It promotes self. It is about self-promotion, self-image, and self-improvement. It is about living a good life in the here and now. There is not much in it about heaven or hell or sin. The gospel is turned into a teaching about spiritual laws that we can tap into and benefit ourselves in the here and now. This is man-centered. It is self-centered. It is self worship. It is satanic.

We are living right now in the last days which Paul described. Everything Paul listed is active, accelerating, and growing exponentially in our society, culture, business, and government today. Look around. People are traitors. They are prideful. They boast of their own goodness, their own intelligence, their own abilities. Men are boasters and proud. They are self willed. They are disobedient and subversive. They love pleasure more than they love God. They have a form of spirituality but it has no impact on changing their behavior. Cursing, lies, and deception pour out of their mouths. The poison of the serpent is on their tongue. They are deceived and deceiving everyone around them. Turn away from them.

Instead, meditate on scripture. Stay in the word and stay in prayer. Abide in Christ every day. Remind yourself of the gospel every day. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Put all your faith, trust, hope, and worship in the Lord Jesus Christ. Love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Do not love the world or what the world offers. We have to live here now because we are salt and light for God in this world. But this world is not our home. Our home is another place. We have not yet arrived at our real home yet. Our real home is in God's kingdom. Don't love this present world of darkness. It is passing away. Love God and abide in him.

### **3:6-9**

What does Paul mean by "this sort". He pointed back to the dangerous people he described in the previous verses. Dangerous people are those who worship self and bear the fruit of sin. Sinful people are dangerous people. But even more specifically Paul described a subset of dangerous people who were also religious and used fake spirituality to deceive people. This sort are those who creep into houses. Interesting and descriptive words. What else creeps around in the Bible? Serpents "creep", so by describing this sort as those who "creep into houses" we get a mental picture of a snake slithering in through an open door or window.

These impostors ensnare and trap a specific type of victim. Those trapped by the devil were the ones who were "silly, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts". These victims were ripe to be trapped and ensnared by the devil's schemes. They already gave themselves to a devilish lifestyle and so when the serpent shows up they were willing victims. Notice how busy these women were? They were busy

learning things but never come to a knowledge of the truth. They sit in the house reading books on psychology, philosophy, and religion, and yet still cannot comprehend the truth of the gospel. The saving knowledge of Jesus Christ evades them. Why? Because they already devoted themselves to another lifestyle. They were silly, laden with sins, and had divers lusts. No matter how much they try to understand themselves through philosophy or psychology it cannot save them from the trap of the serpent. They are willing victims of the serpent through the decisions they made to pursue pleasure, experiences, and esoteric knowledge.

The men whom the devil used to trap them were compared to Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses. This shows us something basic about false spiritual promoters. They resist the truth of the gospel. They stop people from hearing, receiving, and believing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Eventually these impostors are exposed for what they are: servants and followers of the devil.

May God help us have to discernment and escape from the trap of the devil. Pray we will receive a love of the truth and so not be deceived by the lies of the serpent.

### **3:10-12**

Paul used his life as an example for Timothy. He pointed to his doctrine, his manner of life, his purpose, faith, and long suffering. He gave quite a list including afflictions. The idea that afflictions could be proof of someone's Christian character is a foreign concept to modern American Christians who are brainwashed by prosperity propaganda. Paul's life was proof and he offered his life as an example for Timothy to follow. Are we able to do this? Can we tell those whom we teach God's word to follow the example of our life? This is a good question to ask. Let us search our hearts and ask ourselves if our lifestyle helps people come to Christ or drives people away from Christ. Can the people we talk about Jesus with look at our lives and perceive consistency or hypocrisy?

Paul endured afflictions which came to him as a result of preaching the gospel. His afflictions did not come because he had a lack of faith or because of sin, or because he was punished for past sins. All of Paul's sins were laid on the Son of God at Calvary. Everything Paul did was accounted for by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul was an example of God's grace to the worst sinners. He said his life was an example of God's grace. How do people misunderstand these facts and say that Paul suffered afflictions because of sin? People who say this have an agenda they are promoting, a false teaching that Christians should never suffer or be afflicted if they have a certain quantity or quality of faith. This is a false teaching and it confuses people about what faith really is. Read Hebrews 11. Notice they were all commended for their faith but look at the different experiences they had. Some had great victory. Some lived in holes in the ground. But they all were commended for their faith. This blows the prosperity gospel to smithereens.

Let us grow up and see things as they are. Let us grow up and deal with reality as God made it around us. God is in control. Let us learn in whatever situation we are in to be content and to thank God in every circumstance. Let us learn to humble ourselves and acknowledge that we do not have everything figured out. Let us humble ourselves and seek to obey the word of God.

### 3:13

In this period of future history (which is more than likely current history) which Paul called "*the last days*", we see in verse 13 another sign. Another sign of the last days is that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Hasn't this happened already? Looking at history we see evil men and seducers who got worse and worse. So there must be something specific about how Paul described this sign. It is an exponential deterioration of truth. It is a time when deception will be so strong and so encompassing that people will no longer know what is true and false. In other words, it is a time of mass media propaganda. It is a time when there is no longer a way to know what is true or false. Everything in the news or media is twisted and slanted and presented with bias and reinterpretation. Are we living in that day? Are we living in a day of mass propaganda and deception? I would say yes. Definitely, yes.

Something I notice in this verse. People who deceive others are themselves also deceived. Telling lies makes you vulnerable to believing the lies of others. Lying changes your perception of reality. You no longer have a stable reference point to interpret what people say and do around you because you are a liar. Liars live daily with a relative, situational ethic mindset. What does this do to that person? It deprives them of the ability to compare and contrast truth and lies. In other words, they are in moral darkness and cannot perceive when others are deceiving them. Lying turns you into easy prey.

Jesus said this very plainly: "*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a ditch.*" (**Matthew 15:14**)

Also, **Luke 6:39**, "*And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?*"

You can translate "ditch" as pit. A pit of darkness.

I don't know what else I can say to inspire people to flee lies and deception. We should cry out to God to give us a love of the truth. Receive a love of the truth. Love Jesus. Love the truth. Flee from lies and darkness. Do not agree with lies and darkness. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It changes you and will cause your soul to be lost in darkness. Darkness will isolate you. Feel alone? Feel depressed? You have no idea how bad it will get if you keep on living in lies and deception. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and cry out to him to shine the light of the gospel upon your soul. Pray to God he will deliver you from the darkness that will drag your soul down into the pit. The abyss has no bottom.

Jesus Christ died for our sins upon the cross. He was buried. He rose from the dead three days later. Believe this message and be saved.

### 3:14-15

The word "*continue*" stands out to me. We can't just hear and receive and believe, and then stop listening, stop receiving, and stop believing. We must continue. There must be forward momentum. There must be an active, living faith in the living God. A faith that rests on past experiences or

confessions is not enough for today or tomorrow. If we will believe tomorrow we must believe today. We must continue in what we have learned and been assured of.

Where do we learn the gospel? Who told us that Jesus died on the cross for us? For me it was people I looked up to at the time. People I respected. People who I felt like I could trust. I did trust them at the time.

Later I learned to put my trust and faith in God's word alone. The scripture does not change. People change, but God's word remains the same. When Paul encouraged Timothy he could point to himself and say "Trust me, Timothy". Why? Because he knew he was not walking away from Jesus. He could exhort Timothy to trust the word he preached to him because he knew his life backed up the message he preached.

Timothy was taught scripture from the time he was a child. He came from a family of faith. His mother and grandmother taught him the Bible. What a blessing it is to have parents who believe in God and will share God's word with their children.

God told parents in scripture to teach the word to their children. **Deuteronomy 11:19**, *"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."*

Teach children God's word. This is not family devotions around the fire place in the living room. This is a lifestyle of constantly talking about the Lord and his word. This is an active looking for opportunities to point out the truth in God's word to our families. It is a mind that is saturated with God's word and comes out in every situation and makes applications and gives lessons so that children can understand the character and nature of their heavenly Father.

The way children grow up says a lot about the parent. Most people today would rather not face that fact, but instead would rather explain away a child's behavior as being that child's own personality or rebellion. But what does the Bible say? What does scripture say? Forget what culture and society brain wash us with and go back to what the Bible says! The bible says to train up a child and he when he is older he will not depart from it.

A rebellious child means the parent did not live the word of God. Those parents were religious, but did not walk in the power of the Spirit with the word of God flowing out of them like a fountain. God's word brings life and death. In the mouth of a hypocrite God's word brings spiritual death on people. In the mouth of a man filled with the Holy Spirit the word of God brings spiritual life to people.

Don't be deceived. God's word is the truth and sets us free from the lies of the world around us. Don't believe what the world system and world media tell you. Believe the Bible instead.

The Lord Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He was buried in a tomb. On the third day he rose from the dead. Believe the gospel and be saved today.

### 3:16-17

There will be people and evil spirits who will come against the Christian in an attempt to discredit the Bible. Scripture is our resource to build ourselves up in our faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Without the Bible we don't have a leg to stand on. So the Bible will be attacked by every person and spirit who is against God and Jesus. They will attack, undermine, ridicule, and call it into question. They will exalt their own intellect over the Bible. They will try to tear it apart and point out contradictions, errors, or mistakes. Why? Because they do not want to believe in Jesus. Why don't they want to believe in Jesus? Why don't they want to believe in Jesus? Why is it easier to believe in a self-help program, or in Buddha, or in some other false religion than believe in Jesus?

The answer to this is straight forward, but it is impossible for the unbeliever to accept this explanation. They don't believe because they are sinners. Sinners are not able to submit to God or his word. As a result, they look for anything they can find to replace the Bible. This does not change the facts as they are. Men are sinners. The Bible is true. God is still in control.

The only hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is in the gospel that we find a message of hope that we can be forgiven of our sins and reconciled to God. When we believe the gospel then it is easy to believe the Bible. If I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins, he was buried in a tomb, and rose from the dead on the third day then I should not have a problem believing anything else the Bible says.

Unbelief itself is the definition of sin. Men do not believe in God because they are sinners. If they did believe in God they would be too scared to commit sin. We are at some level denying the existence of God every single time we commit sin. If we believed in God we would avoid sin at all costs because we would automatically know he would hold us accountable for every idle word and every act of disobedience.

The truth is plain. God demands justice and will exact vengeance on every sin which man and Satan have committed. It is true that God loves us and has made a way for us to escape his wrath by believing that His Son paid the price for our sins on Calvary. By believing and receiving the gospel we escape from the wrath of God.

Once I believed the gospel the entire world started to make sense. Truly, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Without the knowledge of God's word men live in darkness. The only light they have is what their own imagination can conceive of. But the human imagination could never conceive the gospel. Only God could have come up with that.

Believe in Jesus. Be saved. This is so simple a child can do this and be rescued from an eternity of regret.

## 2 Timothy 4

### 4:1-2

Paul commanded Timothy to reprove, rebuke, and exhort people. With long suffering. And doctrine. This is very rare to find someone who follows through on this. The only time I saw this in my life in a Christian context was in the late 1980s when I was in Teen Challenge. In that context the men received

correction, rebuke, and encouragement all the time. It was the full time job of the staff to correct the residents in the program. This produced amazing results in the lives of the men I was in that program with. Some couldn't take it and left. Others who chose to humble themselves were changed in profound and remarkable ways.

I believe one of the reasons why there is so much apathy in the church is because people do not get rebuked and reproved and exhorted by preachers any more. Some never preach doctrine. We need men of God who will reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

What is the context of these instructions? Paul said he charged Timothy to obey these instructions *"before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ"*. In other words, Paul told Timothy if he did not obey what he was telling him that God and the Lord Jesus would know it and hold him accountable. Let that sink in for a minute.

Also, we have a mention of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom. The Lord will return to the earth at some point in future history. It will happen as sure as the sun rises every morning. A day will arrive when the Lord Jesus will return to this earth and will establish his kingdom. He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will judge each person who ever lived on this planet. The Lord Jesus is the judge of all men. Each one will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Because we will give an account to God we need to be busy encouraging, exhorting, rebuking each other. Human nature is lazy, unbelieving, and prone to backslide at the first chance. We need brothers in Christ who will hold us accountable and correct us on a regular basis. If your local fellowship does not hold each one accountable to live a holy life then you need to keep praying and looking. You may never find a good church in these last days. In that case you need to pray and ask the Holy Ghost to stir you up every day. Ask the Lord to rebuke you, correct you, and exhort you every day. We need it. Don't let yourself get away with anything. Pray and ask God to help you see when you are wrong. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and discernment and a fear of the Lord. He will, at the same time, encourage you, comfort you, and open your heart to feel the great love he has for you.

Believe the gospel. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He is coming back again. Prepare to meet the Lord. Live your life in view of the judgment seat of Christ. His kingdom is nearer today than it was yesterday.

## 4:3-4

Paul said a time would come when men would no longer listen to sound doctrine. He said a time will come. Has this time come? From all indications we are living in the time when men no longer endure sound doctrine. How much worse will it get before the end?

Paul said men would heap to themselves teachers to satisfy the lust that is in their hearts. In other words, a covetous man will find himself a "Christian" teacher who teaches a message of prosperity and wealth. A man who has a heart set on immorality will find a teacher who teaches nothing but mercy and grace with no mention of God's correction or wrath. A man who has a heart set on bitterness will find a teacher who will harden him in this attitude of bitterness.

It will be a time when it is easy to find a teacher to justify any position a man wants to take and people will heap to themselves false teachers. Could this be a description of podcasting? Could this be a time when the Internet makes available every imaginable false teaching under the sun? I think so. I think there has never been a time in history where this prophecy could be fulfilled in such a dramatic and profound way. Internet, podcasting, audio and video streaming. Men are heaping to themselves teachers and have itching ears. They want that nagging feeling in their conscience to be silenced. How can you silence the voice of the Holy Spirit? Replace it with constant audio bombardment from smooth talkers who teach you how to succeed in this short, brief span of time you have on this earth.

I know I have fallen into this at times. It is easy to go looking for men who teach a message that suits your lifestyle. It has never been easier in history to find a Bible teacher to tell you what your itching ears want to hear.

If I go on one of these podcast platforms I know what I will find at the top of the list in the Christian section. Wolves in sheep's clothing. False teachers, false preachers, and false prophets promoting a false gospel. That is what the world loves, and there are plenty of them out there now for people to take their pick of what they podcast they can subscribe to.

How can you find true men of God in these last days? How can you find a messenger of God preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ? There is only one way. You must repent of covetousness, and lust, and greed, and immorality. You must cry out to God with all of your heart to lead you on the path of holiness. You must cry out to God to give you a heart that receives a love of the truth. You must thirst and hunger for righteousness. If you will humble your heart like this then God will lead you to men of God who will reprove, rebuke, and exhort you with all long suffering and doctrine. The Lord will lead you into green pastures and beside the quiet waters.

## 4:5

The word "watch" comes up a lot in the New Testament. Jesus told his disciples to watch and pray. Peter exhorts us to be alert and watchful. We have an adversary who prowls around like a predator looking for someone to devour.

Watch! Just don't look to the right or to the left. Watch in all things. Watch how much you eat. How much you watch TV. How much you exercise. How much you read and study the Bible. How much you help people. How much you pray. How much you sleep. How much you encourage and bless people. Watch thou in all things. Most importantly watch out for yourself. That self-life in you, that old man, that flesh, is your worst enemy. It is pulling you towards the ground, towards a pit, towards the gutter. It always pulls you down toward the ditch and the hole in the ground. It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to rise above that self-life (old man, or flesh, as Paul called it).

Endure afflictions. We cannot avoid afflictions. You cannot run from them. You cannot hide from them. You must endure afflictions. This is a normal part of the Christian life.

An evangelist preaches the gospel with the goal of bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When you teach the Bible is it with the intent of impacting lives and seeing someone get saved? What is your purpose in teaching, preaching, sharing God's word? What is your goal? Is it the same goal that Paul had? Is it the same goal Jesus has?

We need to press on and make sure we complete everything which God put us here for. That means we need to make full proof of our ministry. Our service needs to be completed. We have tasks to complete. We have work to get done. We cannot lose sight of the fact that there is an end to our life here and we need to make good use of the time we have in order to complete the task which God gave us. Make full proof of thy ministry.

Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and me. He died in our place. He died so we would not have to die and go to hell. He was buried in a tomb. On the third day he rose from the dead. There is life after death. Jesus rose from the dead. He is the Son of God. He is God the Son. Faith in Jesus Christ will impart to you eternal life. To know Jesus is to have eternal life. Let us call on his name today.

## **4:6-8**

When Paul considered the end of his earthly life the next thought he had was receiving a reward from the Lord for his faithful service. This was a man who had a clear conscience. He knew that he had served the Lord with all his heart and that he had completed the work the Lord gave him. He was now ready to leave the earthly life and enter the next life where the Lord had a crown of righteousness for him.

This crown of righteousness was not just for Paul. Paul said anyone who also loved the appearing of the Lord Jesus would receive a crown of righteousness. To me this simply means those who continually think about the return of the Lord and have that as their goal, purpose, and hope in life will be rewarded by the Lord one day with a crown of righteousness.

There are many things people have as goals in life. They endure because they love their children. They put up with suffering and endure their job because they care about their family. But there is a much higher goal and purpose than family love. That goal is to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. This is the greatest thing we can ever do.

Someone who looks forward to Jesus coming back is not putting their hope and trust into what this world offers. Instead, they look ahead to something better in the kingdom of God.

Decide you will fight the good fight, finish the course, and offer your dying breath in praise to the Lord who saved your soul on Calvary's cross.

## **4:9-13**

Here is a father's dying request to his son in the faith. He asked Timothy to come to him as soon as possible. There was an urgency here. He didn't know how much longer he would be here. Also, his friends seemed to have deserted him or become busy with their own lives or ministries. How sad that at the end of his life the best missionary who ever lived was practically alone and waiting to be executed. Just a handful of people were his friend. This is how the world works. People forget about the elderly. They forget about showing compassion and mercy when they can no longer use someone or get something in return. May the Lord help me to never turn my back on someone in need. May the Lord help me and I pray that my heart will never be hardened toward someone in need.

Notice the simple requests that he made. He asked Timothy to bring him his coat and his Bible. He wanted to stay warm and he wanted to read his Bible.

Also, Mark had somehow been restored to a good relationship with Paul after their previous falling out in the book of Acts. Now he said Mark was profitable for the ministry. People can change. Barnabas knew this and did not give up on Mark. And now Paul acknowledged the change that took place in Mark's life.

God can change anyone. He can give us a new heart, a new attitude, and a new way of seeing things if we will listen to him. He can help us to become what he planned for us to be.

People abandoned Paul. Paul said they abandoned him, not because they did not love him, but because they loved what the world had to offer more. This is the case with many people. It is not as though people don't care about God or church or the Bible. But they just love what the world offers more. And so, at some point in their life, they just turn their back on God. We cannot love God and the world. We may try to hold both for a while, but eventually we will cross over to one side or the other. The road will reach a fork and we will go one of two ways. I've seen it happen. It is clear when someone hits that fork in the road. It's like you never even knew them.

Remember the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Call upon the name of Jesus and be saved today.

## **4:14-18**

Paul named names. He called out Alexander the copper smith by name. We do not need to be afraid or intimidated to call out the enemies of Christ by name. We need to mark people who are enemies of the gospel. Why? So we can avoid them and pray for them. Paul said the Lord would reward Alexander according to his works. This pointed forward to the prophecy in Revelation where men stand before God and are judged according to their works. You can tell when someone is not saved, because they believe they can do enough good works to outweigh the bad things they have done. They believe they can save themselves by their good works. God will judge them by this. He will judge them by their works. Unfortunately, no will escape God's wrath through means of self-justification. We cannot justify ourselves before a holy God. All our righteousness is filthy rags.

There is only one hope for the sinner and that is the Savior Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness. He is our salvation and he is our justification. Outside of Christ there is only wrath and hellfire waiting for men.

Paul pointed to the fact that this man would face God's wrath by becoming an enemy of the gospel. Everyone who makes themselves an enemy of Christ and the gospel will face the wrath of God.

When Paul gave his defense before his earthly judges he had no friends to support or testify on his behalf. There were no character witnesses present to speak on Paul's behalf. However, the Lord Jesus stood with Paul and gave him the boldness and the spiritual power to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who judged him. All the Gentiles heard the gospel message. Therefore those who judged Paul on that day will have no excuse on the day of their own judgment before God Almighty. Paul was faithful to testify to them the truth that is in Jesus Christ.

The Lord delivered Paul out of the mouth of the lion. This could mean he literally escaped a lion like Daniel in the Old Testament. Or perhaps Paul spoke of being delivered from the attack of Satan on him. Peter called the devil a roaring lion who goes around looking for someone to devour.

We have a promise we can stand on. God will deliver us from every evil work and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom. No matter what men do to us they cannot take away our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul knew this from personal experience. He knew God loved him and nothing could change that. His sins were washed away in the blood of his Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus died on Calvary for our sins. He was buried in a tomb. He rose from the dead on the third day. When we call on his name we are forgiven of our sins and washed clean and made whole. We are saved from the penalty that our sins deserve. All of God's wrath was poured out on the Lord Jesus at Calvary. He took our place so we would not have to spend eternity in hell separated from God. It is not God's will for anyone to perish, but for every man to come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is simple. Believe the good news and be saved today.

## **4:19-22**

Paul's final thoughts are on his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul was a point of contact for so many people. He was a conduit of God's love for the brethren in the church. Are we? How many people do we pray for and care for and love in the church? This is a question I should ask myself. How many people do I carry in my heart.

Years ago I kept a prayer list of people I prayed for. I can still remember the names of people I knew over twenty years ago I prayed for. They have probably forgotten me by now but I did not forget them because I prayed for them.

I have some short prayer lists now of people I pray for. Most of these are family members, relatives, and people I worked with. I also try to remember the church worldwide especially brethren who are suffering for their faith in countries where Christians are openly persecuted. I pray that their faith will not fail them.

Paul's final word was that the Lord Jesus Christ be with Timothy's spirit. The Lord is with us always. He said that he would always be with us, even to the end of the age. So we pray, "Even so, return to us, Lord Jesus." I want to be where he is. May the Lord be with our spirit today and forever.

Grace be with you.

Mike Kines  
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